



# News Release

**IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**  
1301 N. Orchard St., Boise, ID 83706 - TEL: (208) 327-7900 FAX: (208) 327-7866  
*Internet Homepage: <http://www.idwr.state.id.us>*

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**Release 2004-03**

**IDWR SETS PUBLIC MEETING**  
**ON MOSCOW-PULLMAN AQUIFERS PETITION**

For Immediate Release  
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For Media Information Contact:  
Dick Larsen - (208) 327-7933

State water managers will hold a special public meeting in Moscow on February 2 to provide information and receive comments about a petition seeking to establish a moratorium and a pair of ground water management area designations for the Moscow-Pullman area aquifers, the Director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources announced today.

The petition seeks to have IDWR impose a moratorium on the processing and approval of all pending and new applications for water rights from both the shallow and deep aquifer systems serving the Latah County and Moscow-Pullman region. The petition also asks IDWR to establish a critical ground water management area for the Grande Ronde Aquifer, the deep regional aquifer that serves the Moscow/Latah County area; and that it designate the Wanapum and shallow level aquifer as a ground water management area, according to Karl J. Dreher, IDWR Director.

The meeting will be held February 2 (Monday) from 7-9 p.m. at the courtroom of the University of Idaho College of Law, Director Dreher said. The courtroom is located in the Menard Law Building at 6th and Rayburn. The meeting is open to all residents, both Idaho and Washington, who have an interest in ground water issues in the Moscow-Pullman-Latah County area.

The meeting is not a public hearing at which formal pro and con testimony will be taken on the petition. Rather, it is specifically designed as a public information exchange forum at which area residents can get insights and provide comments regarding the current ground water situation, Director Dreher said.

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The petition was filed with IDWR in November by five groups including the Palouse Water conservation Network, the Friends of the Clearwater, the Moscow Civic Association, the Palouse Group of the Sierra Club and the Idaho Conservation League's North Idaho Office.

At the meeting, Dale Ralston, a retired U of I scientist, will a special presentation that explains the hydrology of the Grande Ronde and Wanapum aquifers and examine the current ground water situation.

Senior IDWR officials then will explain to area residents just what a moratorium on pending and new water right applications would entail. They will also explain what designations of both ground and critical ground water management areas would mean to both current and future applications for ground water use from the aquifers.

"The petition asks that I take specific actions regarding the Grande Ronde and Wanapum aquifers. It is critical to the evaluation process that Moscow and Latah area citizens understand what that would mean," Director Dreher said.

A special Internet web site has also been created to provide information about the petition. The site will also provide residents with the opportunity to file email comments about the petition. The Internet address is: **[www.idwr.state.id.us/Moscow](http://www.idwr.state.id.us/Moscow)**.

The meeting is being held in a facility that meets the accessibility requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act. If you special assistance to participate in or to understand the meeting, please contact Victoria Wigle, (208) 327-7910, in advance so arrangements can be made.